the High Court nor the subject matter nor the date of the order has been mentioned. However, in pursuance of the orders of the Punjab and Haryana Court dated 25.7.1997 in PIL No. 915/97, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered 13 cases *viz.* seven in Punjab and 6 in Haryana Region. The investigation in all the above cases has been completed by CBI. Action against the guilty officials, as recommended by CBI, has been taken.

Sale of foodgrains meant for BPL

215. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large quantity of foodgrains meant for BPL families are sold in the open market;

(b) if so, the manner in which Government plan to stop such malpractices;

(c) what punishment Government impose on such traders; and

(d) the number of traders who were punished during the current year, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) to (d) No Sir. In the event of diversion of foodgrains supplied under Public distribution System (PDS), action is liable in terms of Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001. Violations are punishable under Section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

Rejection of consignment from USA

216. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has rejected a large consignment of Soya-Corn blend from the U.S.A.;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c) whether the consignment has been referred to the Genetic Engineering Committee; and

(d) if so, what are the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The proposal of M/s CARE, India and Catalytic Research Services (CRS) to import Corn Soya Blend (CSB) containing genetically modified (GM) material under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was considered by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC). The GEAC noted that there are several GM corn varieties being cultivated in USA both for human consumption and animal feed. In the absence of any certification from US regulatory agency confirming that the CSB shipment to India does not contain the banned or obsolete variety of corn event, and in view of the apprehension expressed by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) regarding feeding the vulnerable population with GM food, the GEAC decided not to permit the import of CSB.

Food stock position

217. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's current food stocks position is at the lowest level;

(b) if so, the cause of the declining trend; and

(c) the action proposed to boost export and replenish food stocks with new procurements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Due to various steps taken to liquidate the stocks, there is a declining trend. However, the stock position is still above the buffer norms.

(c) Over the last two years a number of steps have been taken to boost export of foodgrains including setting up of an empowered committee to redress the grievances of exporters.